

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 SSM-05

ARA-10 EA-09 PA-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05 SS-15

INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 MC-02 L-03 DODE-00

PM-04 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-07 ACDA-10 DHA-02 SCCT-01 /136 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/ARP - MR. DICKMAN

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USMISSION GENEVA

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION SINAI
CINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JULY 21

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JULY 21,
1976:

Q. WHAT CAN YOU SAY IN REGARD TO THE STORY IN THE POST
THIS MORNING THAT ISRAEL HAS BEEN OR IS SUPPLYING ARMS TO
LEBANON, TO THE MARONITE CHRISTIANS?

A. THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF REPORTS ABOUT ARMS IN
LEBANON. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE PARTIES IN LEBANON ARE
GETTING ARMS FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES. AND WE ARE JUST NOT,
AND HAVE NOT BEEN, IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THE VARIOUS
SOURCES OF ARMS TO THE VARIOUS PARTIES IN LEBANON.

Q. BUT DO YOU KNOW IF ANY AMERICAN-SUPPLIED ARMS MAY BE
INVOLVED?

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A. AS WE HAVE SAID, WE HAVE NOT APPROVED ANY DIRECT OR
INDIRECT TRANSFER OF AMERICAN WEAPONS TO ANY PARTY TO THE
LEBANESE CONFLICT.

Q. THE REPORT SAYS THAT THE MARONITE CHRISTIANS ARE
USING NATO-TYPE ASSAULT RIFLES. IT DOESN'T SAY CLEARLY,
BUT IT IS PRESUMED THAT THESE COME FROM ISRAELI SOURCES.

ONE ASSUMES THEY COME -- IF THIS IS TRUE, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY AT LEAST THAT ISRAEL IS PASSING OUT WEAPONS INTENDED FOR ITS OWN SELF-DEFENSE TO OTHER PARTIES. IS THERE ANY INQUIRY GOING ON INTO WHETHER THIS IS A VIOLATION?

A. I DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THAT BUT, AS YOU KNOW, THERE ARE SOURCES AND THERE ARE AMERICAN WEAPONS AVAILABLE IN THE WORLD IN GENERAL THAT HAVE NOT COME THROUGH THE CHANNEL OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO OTHER COUNTRIES. THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF WEAPONS IN THIS WORLD ON THE COMMERCIAL MARKET. AND THE PARTIES IN LEBANON HAVE NOT HAD ANY DIFFICULTY OBVIOUSLY IN GETTING WEAPONS.

Q. YOU SEEM RATHER EQUANIMOUS ABOUT THE PROSPECT THAT U.S. WEAPONS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN CHanneled FROM ISRAEL TO A THIRD PARTY. NOW, IS THERE NO CONCERN THAT THIS MIGHT BE THE CASE? IS IT FELT THAT IT IS NOT THE CASE, OR WHAT?

A. AS I SAID, WE ARE JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT OR VERIFY THE SOURCES OF ARMS OF THESE PARTIES. OF COURSE, WE ARE ALWAYS CONCERNED ABOUT ANY DIVERSION OF AMERICAN WEAPONS. BUT GIVEN THE SITUATION THAT EXISTS IN LEBANON AND THE FACT THAT THERE ARE PLENTY OF ARMS THERE, IT IS JUST VERY DIFFICULT FOR US TO ANSWER SUCH A QUESTION.

Q. A WHILE AGO WHEN YOU SAID THE UNITED STATES HASN'T APPROVED THE TRANSFER OF ARMS, AMERICAN ARMS, DID YOU SAY "TO ANY COUNTRY?"

A. TO ANY PARTY.

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Q. SO THAT WOULD CERTAINLY INCLUDE THE LEBANESE FACTIONS?

A. RIGHT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW IF THERE IS ANY STUDY BEING CONDUCTED BY LEGAL AUTHORITIES REGARDING POSSIBLE ARMS TRANSFERS TO LEBANON?

ONE QUESTION I WOULD HAVE IN MIND IS WHETHER IT COULD BE LEGITIMATELY CONSIDERED AS ISRAELI SELF-DEFENSE.

A. I HAD NOT HEARD THAT PROPOSITION ADVANCED BEFORE. I DO NOT KNOW OF ANY STUDY, NO.

Q. THE ISRAELIS STOPPED A GREEK VESSEL A COUPLE OF

DAYS AGO CARRYING ARMS FROM EGYPT TO LEBANON. ARE YOU AWARE OF EGYPT SUPPLYING ARMS TO ANY FACTION IN LEBANON?

A. I JUST AM NOT ABLE TO SPECULATE ON WHERE THE SOURCES OF THESE VARIOUS ARMS ARE. I JUST DO NOT KNOW.

Q. IS ANY EFFORT BEING MADE TO VERIFY OR DISCOUNT THIS STORY, APPROVE IT OR DISPROVE IT?

A. I SAID IT IS THE KIND OF REPORT -- AND THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER REPORTS LIKE THIS -- THAT ARE PRETTY DIFFICULT TO VERIFY GIVEN THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

Q. ONE COULD ASK THE ISRAELIS. HAS THAT BEEN DONE?

A. I DO NOT KNOW. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF ARMS IN LEBANON, AND VARIOUS PARTIES ARE GETTING ARMS FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES. IT IS APPARENT.

Q. DOES FOREIGN ARMS SUPPLY TO LEBANON QUALIFY AS THE OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE OR INTERVENTION THAT YOU HAVE WARNED AGAINST SO MANY TIMES?

A. WE HAVE NOT RESTRICTED OUR DEFINITION. WE HAVE SAID UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT WE WERE OPPOSED TO OUTSIDE MILITARY INTERVENTION. AND THAT IS AN ALL-INCLUSIVE STATEMENT AND STILL STANDS.

Q. DOES THAT INCLUDE SUPPLY OF ARMS BY FOREIGN POWERS? IS THAT OUTSIDE MILITARY INTERVENTION?

A. I WOULD HAVE TO LOOK INTO THAT. WHETHER WE HAVE FOCUSED ON THAT SORT OF A PRECISE DEFINITION, I AM JUST NOT SURE.

Q. BOB, IT HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED THAT THE MARONITES ARE GETTING SOVIET WEAPONS. HAVE YOU ANY VERIFICATION OF THAT?

A. NO, I DO NOT.

Q. SOVIET-MADE WEAPONS.

A. I HAVE SEEN THOSE REPORTS, BUT I DO NOT HAVE ANY VERIFICATION.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE EVACUATION? IS THERE A DATE -- MEANS?

A. NO, WE ARE STILL WORKING TO ARRANGE THE EVACUATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BUT IT IS STILL NOT FIRM AS TO WHEN WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO. THE ROAD CONVOY IS STILL BEING CONSIDERED, BUT I WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE OTHER MEANS.

Q. THE OTHER BEING "SEA?"

A. AIR OR SEA.

BUT IT IS A ROAD CONVOY WHICH IS BEING PLANNED AT PRESENT.

Q. HAVE ANY THREATS BEEN RELAYED TO US? IN OTHER WORDS, HAVE WE BEEN ADVISED THAT LIBYA PERHAPS, WHICH IS ONE RUMOR I HAVE HEARD, OR MAYBE SOME OTHER FORCES, WOULD INTERFERE WITH THE CONVOY -- AND THAT IS THE REASON IT WAS CALLED OFF?

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A. NO, I HAVE NOT HEARD THAT. IT IS JUST THAT BASICALLY, THERE IS A SELF-EVIDENT SECURITY PROBLEM IN LEBANON, AND THE PEOPLE WE WERE WORKING WITH JUST SAID THAT THE ROUTE WAS NOT SECURE WHEN WE WERE FORCED TO POSTPONE THE FIRST ONE ON TUESDAY, YESTERDAY.

Q. IS AMBASSADOR SEELYE COMING OUT?

A. WE STILL HAVE NOT MADE A DECISION ON THAT.

Q. ASAD IN A VERY LONG SPEECH YESTERDAY SAID THAT HE HAD REJECTED A NUMBER OF AMERICAN PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. AND ALSO IN THE COURSE OF THE SPEECH HE SAID THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO A CONTINUATION OR A RESUMPTION OF THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS INITIATED BY KISSINGER -- WHICH, HE SAID, WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL.

HAVE YOU ANY COMMENT ON THAT?

Q. WHOSE SPEECH IS THAT?

Q. ASAD.

A. PRESIDENT ASAD GAVE A LONG -- I READ ONE PLACE A THREE HOUR SPEECH. I HAVE SEEN A SUMMARY OF IT.

I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO COMMENT ON ANY OF THE POINTS

MADE BY PRESIDENT ASAD.

AS WE HAVE SAID HERE, MANY TIMES, WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ALL OF THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED ABOUT ALL ASPECTS OF THE LEBANESE CONFLICT -- WHICH WAS A LARGE PART OF WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT. BUT I AM JUST NOT ABLE TO GET INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR EXCHANGES WITH THE SYRIANS OR WITH ANY OF THE OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

Q. DOES ANYBODY HAVE A LIST OF WHAT COUNTRIES THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS GOING TO VISIT WHEN HE TAKES OFF IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF TEHERAN?
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A. NO. ANY OTHER COUNTRIES THAT HE MIGHT VISIT HAS NOT BEEN DECIDED UPON YET. ROBINSON

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